

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3237

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

S E C R E T BANGKOK 7799

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : PINT, PFOR, SREF, TH

SUBJECT : UBON VICE GOVERNOR COMMENTS ON THAI-NORTH VIETNAMESE
RELATIONS AND MONARCHY

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL UDORN, 13 MAY 74,
ACTION AMEMBASSY BANGKOK, IS REPEATED NOW FOR YOUR INFO:

QUOTE

S E C R E T UDORN 121

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SREF, TH

SUBJECT: UBON VICE GOVERNOR COMMENTS ON THAI-NORTH VIETNAMESE
RELATIONS AND MONARCHY

1. SUMMARY: UBON VICE GOVERNOR DETCHAT WONGKOMONCHET TOLD VICE
CONSUL IN UBON THAT ROYAL THAI GOVT ACTIVITY PURSUING CONTACTS
WITH DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM THROUGH FRENCH EMBASSIES
IN BANGKOK AND VIENTIANE AND THAT EXCHANGE OF THAI-DRV REPRE-
SENTATION SHORT OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS POSSIBLE WITHIN A YEAR
DETCBAT CONCERNED THAT RTG OFFICIALS SUCH AS THANAT KHOMAN WHO
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ARE PURSUING CONTACTS WITH DRV DO NOT APPRECIATE THREAT TO RTG

SECURITY POSED BY VIETNAMESE REFUGEES LOYAL TO HANOI. HE ALSO CRITICAL OF "NAIVE" ASSUMPTION THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN RTG AND DRV WOULD CAUSE INSURGENCY TO DISAPPEAR. DETCHAT ALSO CONCERNED THAT KING'S ENTHUSIASM FOR PLAYING POLITICS UNHEALTHY WHO AWARD CONTACTS THEY HAVE ALSO ACQUIRED INFLUENCE OVER CERTAIN RTG OFFICIALS, ESPECIALLY MUNICIPALITY IN UBON. ALTHOUGH VIETNAMESE LEGALLY ENTITLED TO BID FOR CONTRACTS, VICE GOVERNOR FELT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO REDUCE PERCENTAGE OF THOSE AWARDED THEM.

3. VICE GOVERNOR SAID HE HAD SPOKEN TO VIETNAMESE PROBLEM TO SEVERAL HIGH LEVEL RTG OFFICIALS INCLUDING JUSTICE MINISTER DR. PRAKOP HUTASING, BUT THEY DID NOT SHARE HIS CONCERN. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS TO RTG DECISION TO TRY TO OPEN DIALOGUE WITH HANOI IN HOPES THIS WOULD SOLVE REFUGEE PROBLEM AS WELL AS INSURGENCY. HE SAID SENIOR OFFICIAL IN BANGKOK TOLD HIM RTG ACTIVELY PURSUING CONTACTS WITH DRV WITH HELP OF FRENCH EMBASSIES IN BANGKOK AND VIENTIANE. VICE GOVERNOR SAID SOURCE TOLD HIM THAT THANAT KHOMAN HAD STATED PRIVATELY TO DR. PUAY UNGPAKON THAT SOME EXCHANGE OF OFFICIAL REPRESENTATION BETWEEN RTG AND DRV POSSIBLE WITHIN YEAR.

4. MONARCHY VULNERABLE. VICE GOVERNOR PARTICULARLY WORRIED ABOUT FUTURE OF MONARCHY. HE CONCERNED THAT KING HAS ACQUIRED TASTE FOR POLITICS AND SPECIFICALLY CRITICIZED HIS APPOINTMENT OF NATIONAL CONVENTION. DETCHAT WORRIED THAT KING'S INCREASED INVOLVEMENT COULD LEAD TO CRITICISM BY SOME GROUPS AND SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN PRESTIGE OF MONARCHY. HE SAID SOME POLITICIANS, ESPECIALLY ASSEMBLY SPEAKER KUKRIT PRAMOT, USING KING TO PROMOTE THEIR OWN INTERESTS. DETCHAT MENTIONED SIHANOUK AS EXAMPLE OF WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN ROYALTY BECOMES TOO INVOLVED IN POLITICS. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT KING WOULD GET OUT OF BANGKOK THIS SUMMER AND SPEND TIME IN MORE APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES SUCH AS SAILING.

5. COUP POSSIBILITIES. VICE GOVERNOR SAID HE FELT ARMY WOULD KEEP ITS WORD AND ALLOW ELECTIONS TO TAKE PLACE, BUT AFTER THAT IT WOULD BE NEW BALL GAME. IF MP'S FAILED TO DISCIPLINE THEMSELVES AND DEAL WITH SERIOUS PROBLEMS FACING KINGDOM, ESPECIALLY INFLATION, ARMY MIGHT MOVE TO TAKE POWER AGAIN. HE SAID ARMY
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MIGHT EVEN SECRETLY CONTRIBUTE TO CAMPAIGNS OF MORE RADICAL MPS SO THAT AFTER ELECTIONS MILITARY COULD POINT TO IRRESPONSIBLE MPS AND CLAIM THAT FUTURE COUP IN PUBLIC INTEREST TO PREVENT "IDIOT MPS FROM RUINING COUNTRY."

6. DETCHAT SAID IT DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO MAKE CRITICISMS DIRECTLY TO SENIOR RTG OFFICIALS BECAUSE OF HIS PAST ASSOCIATION WITH LEADERS OUSTED IN OCTOBER AND BECAUSE THIS IS "KING'S GOVERN-

MENT." HE EXPRESSED HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT POINTS ABOUT VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND RTG-DRV RELATIONS MIGHT BE RAISED WITH RTG LEADERSHIP BY RANKING EMBASSY OFFICIALS BUT ASKED THAT HIS NAME NOT BE USED IN SUCH DISCUSSION.

7. COMMENT: DETCHAT HAS MASTERS DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE FROM CORNELL AND LIKES TO TALK POLITICS WITH US OFFICIALS WHOM HE FEELS WILL RESPECT HIS CONFIDENCES BUT PASS HIS VIEWS UP THE LINE. HE IS A LIVELY CONVERSATIONALIST WHO ENJOYS PORTRAYING HIMSELF AS BEING PRIVY TO SECRETS BUT MAY EXAGGERATE EXTENT OF HIS KNOWLEDGE. NEVERTHELESS, HIS CONCERNS OVER THE VIETNAMESE PROBLEM AND THE FUTURE OF THE MONARCHY SEEM GENUINE.
BROH-KAHN.
UNQUOTE
MASTERS

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